

CLAIMS

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for selling, comprising:

a first party ("aggregator") receiving from a second party ("seller")
information on a product or service ("item") for sale;

the aggregator preparing a catalog that comprises a plurality of listings of
said item offered for sale by a corresponding plurality of sellers including said
seller;

the aggregator sending the catalog to a third party ("buyer");

a fourth party ("clearinghouse") receiving from said buyer an order for
purchase of said item and a payment instruction for said order; and

the clearinghouse paying at least one of the aggregator and the seller.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the information from the seller includes an
identification of the item, a price, and a description.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the information further includes at least one of a
fulfillment method and a discount.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the clearinghouse sending to the seller
information about the order.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the order includes an identification of the item
and a shipping address of the buyer.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising the seller sending to the buyer the
item.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said act of receiving from said buyer a payment
instruction comprises:

the clearinghouse receiving the billing information of the buyer to be used for payment for said order;

wherein the clearinghouse does not send said billing information to the aggregator and the seller.

- 5 8. The method of claim 7, wherein:

the clearinghouse receives said billing information during a registration process prior to receiving said order; and

the clearinghouse receives authorization by the buyer to use said billing information on placing said order.

- 10 9. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

the clearinghouse receiving from the seller a notification that the seller has sent the product to the buyer; and

the clearinghouse paying the seller on receipt of said notification.

- 15 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the aggregator receiving from the seller registration information.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the registration information includes at least one of a name, a telephone number, a mail address, a computer network address, billing information, and electronic data interchange information.

- 20 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising the seller sending to a fifth party (“fulfiller”) the item, the fulfiller storing the item.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the clearinghouse sending to the fulfiller a fulfillment instruction for the buyer.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the seller receiving from the fulfiller a notification of an inventory of the item.

15. The method of claim 2, wherein the information further includes at least one of an image and a category.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the catalog is hereafter the “first catalog”, the method further comprising:

5 the aggregator (hereafter “first aggregator”) sending said information to a fifth party (“second aggregator”); and

the second aggregator preparing a second catalog that comprises another plurality of listings of said item offered for sale by another corresponding plurality of sellers including said seller.

10 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the buyer is hereafter the “first buyer”, the method further comprising the second aggregator sending the second catalog to a sixth party (“second buyer”).

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

15 the clearinghouse receiving from said second buyer a payment instruction and an order; and

the second clearinghouse paying at least one of the first aggregator, the second aggregator, and the seller.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the clearinghouse is hereafter the “first clearinghouse”, the method further comprising:

20 a seventh party (“second clearinghouse”) receiving from said second buyer a payment instruction and an order; and

the second clearinghouse sending a payment to at least one of the first aggregator, the second aggregator, and the seller.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

25 the second clearinghouse sending to the seller information about the order; and

the seller sending to the second buyer the item.

21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:

the seller sending to an eighth party ("fulfiller") the item, the fulfiller storing the item; and

- 5 the second clearinghouse sending to the fulfiller a fulfillment instruction for the second buyer.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein the information on the item includes identification of said sellers and said seller makes or provides the item.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller is hereafter the "first seller", the
10 method further comprising the aggregator receiving from a fifth party ("second seller") information on the item, wherein said sellers include the second seller.

24. The method of claim 1, further comprising the aggregator receiving information on the buyer.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the information on the buyer includes at least
15 one of a name, an address, billing information, an interest, an age, an income level, and other characteristics used to profile the buyer for marketing purposes.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein said act of preparing the catalog comprises the aggregator customizing the content of the catalog in accordance to the information on the buyer.

- 20 27. The method of claim 24 wherein said act of preparing the catalog comprises the aggregator customizing the content of the catalog in accordance to the area where the first aggregator distributes the catalog.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein said act of preparing the catalog comprises the aggregator including a string of characters that identifies a sales transaction of the item
25 that can happen between one of the seller and the buyer in the catalog.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the string of characters can be related to transaction details including identifications of the buyer, one of the sellers, the item, and a fulfillment method.

30. The method of claim 28, further comprising:

- 5 the clearinghouse receiving the string of characters from the buyer;

 the clearinghouse sending the string of characters to the aggregator; and

 the aggregator sending transaction details to the clearinghouse.

31. The method of claim 1, wherein said act of preparing the catalog includes one of:

- (a) printing on paper so that said catalog is a paper catalog;

10 (b) transferring said information through a computer network so that said catalog is an online catalog; and

 (c) storing said information on a computer readable medium so that said catalog is an electronic catalog.

32. The method of claim 1, wherein the clearinghouse pays only the aggregator and
15 the aggregator pays the seller.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the aggregator pays a majority of the payment from the clearinghouse to the seller.

34. The method of claim 1, wherein the clearinghouse pays only the seller and the seller pays the aggregator.

20 35. The method of claim 34, wherein the seller pays the aggregator a fixed payment.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein the seller pays the aggregator a percentage of the sale price of the item.

37. A method for selling, comprising:

a first party ("clearinghouse") receiving from a second party ("buyer") billing information of the buyer; and

the clearinghouse receiving from the buyer an order for a product or service ("item") from a catalog generated by a third party ("aggregator");

5 the clearinghouse sending the order to a fourth party ("fulfiller") that fulfills the order, wherein the method is devoid of the clearinghouse and the buyer sending the billing information of the buyer to either the aggregator and the fulfiller.

38. The method of claim 37, further comprising:

10 the aggregator determining if the buyer qualifies for a discount; and

the aggregator providing the discount to the order.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein said determining comprises detecting whether or not the buyer has previously purchased a predetermined number of the item or another item.

15 40. The method of claim 38, wherein said determining comprises detecting whether or not a fifth party ("second buyer") has referred the buyer (hereafter "first buyer") to shop from the catalog.

41. The method of claim 38, wherein said determining comprises detecting whether or not the buyer (hereafter "first buyer") has referred a fifth party ("second buyer") to shop from the catalog.

20 42. A method for selling, comprising:

a first party ("fulfiller") storing a product for a second party ("seller") that sells or makes the product;

25 the fulfiller receiving from a third party ("clearinghouse") an order for the product by a fourth party ("buyer");

the fulfiller sending the product to the buyer;

the fulfiller receiving from the clearinghouse a payment for sending the product to the buyer; and

the seller receiving from one of the clearinghouse and the fulfiller payment for sale of the product.

43. The method of claim 42, further comprising the fulfiller receiving from the seller a payment for storing the product.

44. The method of claim 42, wherein the order for the product includes the identity of the product and a shipping address of the buyer.

45. The method of claim 42, further comprising the fulfiller sending to the clearinghouse a notification that the fulfiller has sent the product to the buyer prior to the fulfiller receiving from the payment.

46. The method of claim 42, further comprising the fulfiller sending to the seller a notification of an inventory of the product.

47. A method of selling, the method comprising:
supplying to a buyer a description of a plurality of items available for sale;
and
receiving from a party other than the buyer information derived from sale to the buyer of an item in the plurality.

48. The method of claim 47, wherein said party is a fulfiller, the information includes the number of items delivered by the fulfiller per unit time and the method comprises a seller supplying said number of items to the fulfiller.

49. The method of claim 47, wherein said party is a financial clearinghouse, the method further comprises receiving payment for the sale from said party, and said method is performed by an aggregator or by a seller.

50. The method of claim 47, wherein said party is a financial clearinghouse, the information consists essentially of financial information related to the sale, but not the identity of buyer.

51. A method for selling an item, comprising:

receiving a plurality of information about the item from a plurality of sellers;

receiving the item from at least one of the sellers;

- 5 generating a catalog from the plurality of information;

storing the catalog and the item on a computer readable medium; and

distributing the computer readable medium to a plurality of buyers.

52. A method for selling an item, comprising:

- 10 sending the item and information about the item to a first party, wherein the first party generates a catalog from the information, stores the item and the catalog on a computer readable medium, and distributes the computer readable medium to a second party;

receiving payment from a third party for a purchase of the item by the second party; and

- 15 sending a key to access the item on the computer readable medium to the second party.

53. A storage medium encoded with:

a first history of purchases of a buyer; and

a second history of sales by a seller;

- 20 wherein the first history includes the purchase of an item from said seller and the second history includes the sale of the item to said buyer.

54. The storage medium of claim 53, further encoded with a third history, wherein the third history includes purchases of items by a plurality of buyers including said buyer and sales of items by sellers including said seller.

55. The storage medium of claim 53, further encoded with one or more of: buyer's name, address, credit card number, interests, age, income level, and password.
56. The storage medium of claim 53, further encoded with one or more of seller's address, telephone number, bank account number, order telephone line, order address
- 5 line, order web address, order email address, and electronic data interchange (EDI) information.
57. The storage medium of claim 53, further encoded with information of a fulfiller used by the buyer to delivery the item, the information including one or more of fulfiller's address, telephone number, bank account number, order telephone line, order
- 10 address line, order web address, order email address, and electronic data interchange (EDI) information.
58. The storage medium of claim 53, further encoded with a delivery status of the item.
59. A method for selling, comprising:
- 15 a first party ("first aggregator") receiving from a first plurality of parties ("first sellers") information on a product or service ("item") for sale;
- the first aggregator sending the information to a second party ("second aggregator");
- the second aggregator preparing a catalog that comprises a plurality of
- 20 listings of said item offered for sale by a corresponding second plurality of parties ("second sellers") including said first sellers;
- the second aggregator sending the catalog to a third party ("buyer"); and
- a fourth party ("clearinghouse") receiving from said buyer a payment instruction and an order.
- 25 60. The method of claim 59, further comprising the clearinghouse sending a payment to at least one of (1) the first aggregator, (2) the second aggregator, (3) one of the first sellers, and (4) one the second sellers.

61. The method of claim 54, further comprising a third aggregator receiving information from the first aggregator and the second aggregator and distributing another catalog containing at least a portion of said information to another buyer.

62. A method for selling, comprising:

5 a plurality of first parties ("sellers") sending to a second party ("buyer") information on a product or service ("item") for sale;

a third party ("clearinghouse") receiving from the buyer a payment instruction and an order;

the clearinghouse sending the order to one of the sellers; and

10 the clearinghouse paying said one of the sellers.

63. A system for selling items, comprising:

a first computer containing information on a plurality of items for sale from a corresponding plurality of sellers;

15 a second computer coupled to the first computer, the second computer containing an order for purchase of one of said items and a payment instruction for the order; and

a third computer being coupled to the first computer and the second computer, the third computer containing a plurality of orders including said order and payment instructions including said payment instruction.